

VZCZCXRO1419  
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH  
DE RUEHGO #1536/01 2900956  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 170956Z OCT 06  
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5297  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1177  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9946  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4369  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1830  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3565  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0527  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7045  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4662  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0939  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0943  
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0673  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2892  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0546  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001536

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: KNU AND SPDC RE-ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS

REF: A. RANGOON 1520

[1](#)B. RANGOON 1065

RANGOON 00001536 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: PolOff Dean Tidwell for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The recent visit to Rangoon by a team representing the Karen National Union (KNU) was not to negotiate a cease-fire agreement, but to re-establish communication links for future negotiations with the regime. The KNU representatives said they would return in two to three weeks, but few expect rapid progress. The visit confirms that Major General Ye Myint, Chief of Military Security Affairs, is resuming the role of ethnic negotiator held by his deposed predecessor Khin Nyunt. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Dr. Rebecca Dee (PROTECT), a Karen community leader based in Rangoon, briefed poloff on the visit to Rangoon by representatives of the Karen National Union (KNU) during the first week of October. Dr. Rebecca and her husband, Dr. Simon Tha, interacted closely with the KNU team while they were in Rangoon. The team comprised Colonel Paw Doh, Lieutenant Colonel Kyaw Ni (Johnny), Major Yin Nu, and Major Sho Ro, a nephew of KNU General Bo Mya. All except the general's nephew were from the Karen National Liberation Army's (KNLA) 7th Brigade, which recently reconciled with KNU leadership after publicly splitting over peace talks with the SPDC (ref B). KNLA sources in Mae Sot claimed that the team traveled to Rangoon with the blessing of the KNU. Dr. Rebecca confirmed that the team carried a letter from KNU President Ba Thin to Senior General Than Shwe to introduce the team and to verify that they truly represented the KNU.

[1](#)3. (C) Dr. Rebecca said media reports that the SPDC intentionally made the KNU representatives wait several days before meeting them were not true. She claimed that the KNU

group departed Mae Sot on September 29, later than originally scheduled, and drove all night to reach Rangoon on September 30. Major General Ye Myint, Burma's Chief of Military Security Affairs, was scheduled to fly to Pakistan that morning, but he met the team briefly en route to the airport to request them to wait in Rangoon until he returned.

14. (C) Ye Myint returned to Rangoon on October 4 and met with the KNU team on October 5. Dr. Rebecca said that the KNU group was not a high-level delegation, but a group tasked to establish formal communication links between the SPDC and the KNU. The SPDC confirmed to the team that Ye Myint would be their POC with the regime and that he would report on the negotiations to Vice Senior General Maung Aye. The KNU team departed Rangoon on October 6 and promised to return in two to three weeks, although Dr. Rebecca speculated the SPDC did not expect them to return immediately.

15. (C) Post-visit media reports claimed that the earlier "gentlemen's agreement" struck between former Prime Minister Khin Nyunt and the KNU had been canceled during the meeting and negotiations would begin again from scratch. Rebecca disputed this account, stating that both sides had only agreed to stop referring to the earlier understanding as a "gentlemen's agreement," but would still follow its key points while negotiating a more permanent accord.

16. (C) COMMENT: The SPDC has clearly given Major General Ye Myint a green light in leading cease-fire negotiations with the KNU and the Karenni National Progressive Party (ref A). The KNU and the KNLA have also clearly patched up their differences over negotiations with the regime (ref B) and now seem prepared to negotiate from a unified position. Although past peace talks between the regime and the KNU have broken down repeatedly, Karen leaders are battle-weary and seem to be more eager than ever to negotiate a durable cease-fire

RANGOON 00001536 002.2 OF 002

agreement before their old guard passes from the scene. END  
COMMENT.  
STOLTZ